

concerts, events, an interpretive trail system, a botanical garden and the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society where Nevadans and tourists alike will find a unique, educational experience about the history of Las Vegas.

Seeking the rich California coast, Spanish traders of the early 19th Century forged a path west that became known as the Old Spanish Trail. Upon discovering a vale of sanctuary, they named it "Las Vegas"—Spanish for "The Meadows." In the years that followed, the Las Vegas Springs welcomed weary travelers, explorers, traders, settlers and Mormon missionaries—all of them drawn here by one common denominator—water from the springs.

Enticing many to remain and make use of its waters, land near the springs was purchased by the railroad, which created the Las Vegas town site. It was water from the natural springs that powered the railroads' steam locomotives. In later years, the Nevada Legislature created the Las Vegas Valley Water District. Among the Water District's inherited holdings was the Las Vegas Springs property.

In 1978, the 180-acre Springs Preserve, located approximately three miles west of downtown Las Vegas, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site represents one of the richest and most unique cultural and biological resources in Southern Nevada. As the largest commercial straw-bale construction project in the United States, the Preserve is erecting seven new green buildings intended to join an elite list of buildings nationwide that have achieved "Platinum" Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

Today, the Springs Preserve site is still owned by the Water District—a steward of water resources in the Valley for more than 50 years. During this time, human progress has surrounded this timeless plot of land, but operational wells and water distribution facilities saved the site from development. The Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Springs Preserve Foundation have formed a public-private partnership that will serve as a unique model for teaching cultural and environmental sustainability. Beginning next month, the story of the Las Vegas Springs will be told through both guided and self-guided tours, interpretive stations and several museum galleries.

As the representative of Nevada's First Congressional District, it gives me immense pride to recognize this outstanding and unique educational facility in the heart of my congressional district. With this example of pioneering preservation, sustainable construction and innovative education, visitors to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve will be inspired by what they see and be motivated to implement the ideals of preserving our past, while simultaneously creating a livable future.

Again, I proudly urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this outstanding public-private educational facility.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW  
WEATHERSTONE

**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 5, 2007*

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Major Andrew Weatherstone on the

occasion of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel on June 1, 2007. Andy is an Army Fellow in my Congressional office this year, and he is an extraordinary soldier and human being.

He is a great leader, a motivator of men and women in his command, a seeker of creative solutions . . . an officer uniquely suited to the United States Army at a moment we need all the great soldiers and officers we can get.

We were lucky to get Andy this year; his last assignment was in Iraq. So my team and I have had the benefit of his counsel at a pivotal moment in our history, as we seek solutions to the ongoing conflict in Iraq and the many readiness issues Iraq has highlighted.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee, with a Masters from the University of Central Michigan, Andy is a soldier's soldier. He came up through the ranks, starting as a platoon leader and battery officer in 1993, to operating a 1,200 strong Task Force and a Forward Operating Base in Taji, Iraq, in 2004.

Andy understands the needs of a battlefield soldier; and he understands the political machinations that surround the conduct of our military policy. He may not be patient with that, but few of us are these days.

He understands that democracy must be defended; and he knows that democracy means involving everybody and all opinions in determining policy.

He knows that freedom is not free, and in wearing the uniform of the United States he is one of those paying the price for all our freedoms on battlefields around the world.

Andy's story would not be complete without including his wife, Jennifer, his "champ," and their daughters Lauren and Elizabeth. Andy got to be home when Elizabeth was born this year.

For all that he has learned in the field, in combat, in training, and in teaching other soldiers . . . LTC Andy Weatherstone will be a remarkable leader in the U.S. Army.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Andy—and his family—on the occasion of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 5, 2007*

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, May 22, 2007, I was unavoidably detained on official business.

I request that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD reflect that had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 395: "No." On motion to recommit with instructions (H.R. 1427).

#### IN LASTING MEMORY OF HAROLD VENABLE

**HON. MIKE ROSS**

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 5, 2007*

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Harold Venable, of Grady, AR, who passed away June 4, 2007, at the age of 78.

Mr. Venable had two passions—farming and public service. He served on the Lincoln County Quorum Court for 24 years and was a member of the Grady City Council. Mr. Venable was a retired farmer recognized as an accomplished agriculturist who won multiple awards at the Arkansas State Fair and was a past recipient of the Farm Family of the Year Award.

Mr. Venable spent a lifetime giving back to his community and his dedication and numerous contributions to agriculture will never be forgotten. Anyone who ever knew him will always remember his smile and good-natured spirit as he always made time for anyone who wanted to talk.

Perhaps most important was Mr. Venable's gracious nature which he bestowed upon his fellow man, something that was deep-seated in his strong faith. He was an active, lifelong member of the First Baptist Church of Grady where he served as a Deacon. In addition, his humble influence and natural ability to lead was evident in all he did. He was a charter member and past President of the Grady Lion's Club, a member of the Long Lake Drainage Board, the Lincoln County Farm Bureau, and the Big Island Hunting Club.

My deepest condolences go to his beloved wife of 59 years, Charlene Venable of Grady; his two daughters, Sondra Ashcroft of Pine Bluff and Billie Issacs of Grady; his three grandchildren Lee Drake of Star City, Christian Ashcraft of Pine Bluff and Britten Ashcraft of Pine Bluff; and to his three brothers Clyde Venable of Grady, Leonard Venable of Little Rock, and Robert Venable of Grady. Harold Venable will be greatly missed in Grady, Lincoln County, and throughout the state of Arkansas.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2317, LOBBYING TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2007 AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2316, HONEST LEADERSHIP AND OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 24, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, today we stand on the verge of passing two pieces of lobby reform legislation that mark an important step toward greater transparency and accountability for Congress. This is a welcome and much-needed response to the growing dissatisfaction of the American people, who do not approve of the increasing role and influence that special interests have on our democracy. There is, however, much more that Congress must do.

In the November 2008 election, the American people made it clear that the corruption that has been seeping into government cannot be tolerated. It is now the task of Congress to raise the standards of ethics in lobbying and campaign finance in order to meet the expectations of the public. We must take action now to remove the grip that private money has on our democracy. I urge my colleagues to support these lobbying reform measures on the floor today, but believe our work is not yet done.